

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION**  
**EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY**  
**INSPECTION REPORT**  
**2009**

**Facility Name:** EAST MESA JUVENILE  
DETENTION FACILITY

**Inspection date:** 11-23-2009

**Last Inspection Date:** 08-01-2009

**Superintendent:** Dan DeLeon, Director  
**Address:** 446 Alta Road  
San Diego, CA 92154

**Telephone Number:** (619) 677-4400  
**Fax:** (619) 677-9482

**Type of Facility:** Detention Facility

**Presiding Juvenile Court Judge:**  
Honorable Susan Huguenor

**Staff Interviewed:**

Dan DeLeon, Director  
Barry Calabrese, Supervisor  
Jackie, Nurse  
Food Services Staff  
CDPOs on duty (informally)  
Roberto Carrillo, Principal  
Dr. Sanchez, MH Clinician

**Commission Inspection Team:**

Charlie Cleaves  
Jessica St. Clair, JJC Chair

**Recommendations**

**The inspection team recommends that the following two recommendations from 2008 remain priorities:**

1. Probation should continue to monitor the budget for opportunities to hire staff for vacant positions.
2. EMJDF should work closely with SAY San Diego to ensure that the new programming contracts adequately meet the needs of the wards in the facility, especially needs related to gang prevention/intervention and parent classes.

**The inspection team recommends the following for 2009:**

3. Probation staff should consider tracking trends or patterns in the nature/type of incidents that lead to wards being placed on Administrative Segregation.
4. School program staff should continue to look for ways to engage youth who have completed their GED/High School Diploma/Certificate of Completion.
5. The Probation Department should explore whether there might be volunteer-based organizations that would be well-positioned to provide occasional transportation to parents with wards at EMJDF who do not have access to transportation. The Juvenile Justice Commission is also researching this possibility.
6. EMJDF and Probation staff should expand on the training that probation officers receive regarding California mandatory child abuse reporting requirements pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 11164 et seq.

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### **Comments**

It should be noted that this facility only detains male youth.

The County of San Diego-Juvenile Justice Commission completed the 2008 inspection of this facility on Aug. 1, 2009. The Commission decided that it would inspect the facility prior to the end of calendar year 2009 in order to maximize the Commission's ability to complete timely inspections in the future.

### **Since the last Inspection**

Number of Suicides:   0    
Number of Attempted Suicides:   1    
Number of Deaths from other causes:   0    
Number of Escapes:   0    
Number of Attempted Escapes:   0  

#### **Local Inspections:**

Title 15 Health: February 19, 2008  
Fire Inspection: May 18, 2009  
Building Inspection: October 21, 2009  
Grand Jury: February 2008

#### **Other Inspections:**

CMA/Medical Quality Inspection: February 19, 2009  
CSA: May 2008

**Date of Last Fire Drill:** There is a facility-wide drill held once per month and each unit holds a fire drill once per month.

### **Training, Personnel, and Management**

**Child supervision, training and staffing levels:** There are currently 219 wards in the facility. The facility was built for 40 youth per unit, but at present the capacity has been capped at 30 youth per unit. On the date of the inspection, there were 43 wards who were 18 years of age or older. A typical length of stay for a ward in this facility is 21-28 days. All of the youth in the facility are held pursuant to California Welfare & Institutions Code (Cal. W&I Code) § 602. While wards are awake, there is one staff member per 10 wards; while the wards are sleeping there is one staff member per 30 wards.

There are a total of 166 personnel at EMJDF, which include 138 correctional deputy probation officers (CDPOs). The inspection team noted that staff members appear to be diverse. Most staff members are bilingual (English/Spanish) and translators who can translate other languages are on-call.

Director Dan DeLeon described staff/youth interactions as good. He stressed that staff members receive yearly training to enhance and improve staff members' ability to interact appropriately and constructively with wards in the facility. Wards receive counseling funded by Juvenile Probation Camp Funding (JPCF). The counseling focuses on case planning and provides an opportunity for the youth to receive one-on-

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one attention from staff members. Director DeLeon added that he is committed to creating a culture in the facility where time spent engaging with the youth is important and expected.

In general, new staff members receive two weeks of juvenile institutions training, spend two to four weeks shadowing a more experienced staff member in a unit, and attend the Juvenile Institutions Core Academy, which lasts approximately six weeks, within one year of the new staff member's date of hire. Most new staff members attend the Core training within 6-8 months.

A new "Use of Force" training program is underway. Supervisor Barry Calabrese is coordinating the new training.

**Policy and Procedure Manual:** Supervisor Calabrese reports that there are policy and procedure manuals located in the Watch Commanders Office, in the administration suite and in each unit. Staff can check one out if they choose to with the administrative secretary. The manual is also located on the Shared drive for all staff to view. The manual is updated quarterly at a minimum.

### **Juvenile Facility Capacity and Crowding**

Supervisor Calabrese led the inspection team's tour of the facility. The tour was shorter than the tour for the 2008, because the 2008 inspection was completed only three and a half months prior to the 2009 inspection.

In general, the facility appeared to be in excellent condition and well-maintained. The inspection team visited the booking area, clinic, kitchen and unit "B" and "D." "B" is one of two Youthful Offender Unit (YOU) program units. Units "A" and "B" are used to house the youth in this program. Recently, staff assigned wards that are in the earlier phases of this program to Unit "B," and wards that are in later stages of this program to Unit "A." Each unit has its own recreation yard, which is about the size of three basketball courts. The team viewed the yard in the "B" unit. This yard appears clean and free of debris. Each unit has a locked cabinet for cleaning chemicals.

None of the units are overcrowded, and the facility as a whole is within its capacity.

Weapons are not permitted in the facility. Lockers are located at the main and staff entrances.

### **Classification and Segregation**

**Classification:** Wards are assigned to the unit in which they are housed depending on their circumstances and their program. Wards in the Units "A" and "B" are in the YOU program described above. Unit "C" is a maximum security unit. Unit "D" is a unit for younger teens. Unit "F" is set up for administrative segregation. Unit "J" houses boys who are waiting to be sent to one of the camps or who are sentenced to time in one of the camps, but are not able to serve time there due to a history of fire-setting behavior, problems with outdoor allergens, or other concerns.

Two units are not occupied currently but can be used for training.

**Orientation:** Youth housed at EMJDF typically spend time at Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility (KMJDF) prior to EMJDF. Therefore, most of the orientation occurs at that time. Wards are provided with an orientation that is specific to EMJDF when they arrive. Staff members provide a daily rules and

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sexual harassment briefing. Rules are either posted in the unit, provided to the ward in writing, or both.

**Segregation:** Unit "F" is designed to be used as an administrative segregation unit. The length of time a ward spends in this unit depends on the reason which they were segregated.

**Segregation trends:** Supervisor Calabrese reports that there are no trends related to youth being placed on Administrative Segregation (AS/Unit "F"/Foxtrot). Wards are placed on AS based on the specifics of the incidents or the number of previous incidents.

**Assessment, Planning, Counseling and Casework Services:** The assessment and services provided to each youth depend on the disposition of their case and the program to which the youth has been committed.

If a youth is committed to Breaking Cycles, a complete assessment is done through the Breaking Cycles program to determine if he will go to the Juvenile Ranch Facility (JRF) and what services he will need.

If a ward is committed to Camp Barrett, he is placed in Unit "J" while he is at EMJDF, and he receives counseling services through the Correctional Counselor/staff and programmers until he goes to Camp Barrett.

If a ward is committed to the Youthful Offender Program (YOU), the ward receives an orientation assessment within three weeks of commitment. The youth gets extensive services through Second Chance.

All other wards receive services/planning from staff, programmers, and casework probation officers. If a youth is waiting for placement, the casework probation officer will schedule interviews with group homes, etc.

**Use of Force /Use of Physical Restraint/Safety Room Procedures:** EMJDF has written policies related to the use of force, physical restraint, safety rooms, and other serious interventions. Specifically, these policies include:

- Section 5.9 Intervention Techniques-General Provisions
- Section 5.10 Use of Physical Force
- Section 5.11 Use of Mechanical Restraints & Safety Shield
- Section 5.12 Use of OC Spray
- Section 5.13 Disciplinary Removal
- Section 5.14 Use of Safety Room
- Section 5.15 Use of Restraint Chair

Time out rooms are used when wards need to calm down. Probation staff must have approval from the Watch Commander to leave a youth in a time out room for more than one hour. Time out rooms have video camera surveillance.

**Searches:** EMJDF has a written policy which describes "unit shakedown" procedures. Supervisor Calabrese reports that as part of the overall unit security plan, unannounced unit shakedowns shall be conducted at least one (1) time per month on a random basis. However, officers are authorized and encouraged to conduct unit shakedowns as often as deemed necessary, or whenever they have reasonable cause to suspect the existence of contraband.

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**Grievance Procedure:** Wards have the ability to make written grievances regarding any matter they choose. Supervisor Calabrese indicated that youth in the facility do use the procedures. He estimates they make approximately 20 grievances per month. He suggested that the most common grievances are related to markdowns.

### **Reporting of Incidents**

Written incident reports are completed in the following situations:

- Escape
- AWOL
- Assaults on staff by detainees
- Fights, threats of violence
- Bomb threats, fires, explosions
- Death of detainee
- Suicide attempts
- Staff use of force (including use of OC spray)
- Restraint chair or safety room
- Medical emergencies
- Sexual activity between youth
- Staff injuries
- Any reason deemed appropriate by staff or directed by a supervisor
- Some critical situations (Riots, Medical Emergencies, Escapes, Fires, Hostage, Bomb Threats) require the notification of outside agencies (Sheriff, Police, Ambulance)

### **Programs and Activities**

**School Program:** Principal Roberto Carrillo provided information about the school and education programs for the wards.

There are 15 full-time contracted teachers; 3 contracted Special Education teachers; 1 limited contract Special Education teacher, and 6 long-term substitute teachers. All wards in the facility either attend school or participate in some type of education program. The student-to-teacher ratio is 15 students:1 credentialed teacher. Special Education teachers, Teacher's Assistants and Special Education assistants are also present in the classroom depending on the time of day and nature of the activity. When other professionals are in the classroom, the ratio is smaller. All students receive homework. Very few students are not eligible to attend school. Students who are confined to their rooms and are not able to attend school are still given reading material or coursework whenever possible. All 219 wards in the facility on the day of the inspection team's visit were attending school. The curriculum is aligned with Western Association of Schools & Colleges. Program set and supervised by the San Diego County Office of Education (Juvenile Court and Community Schools).

Five computers are available in each classroom; however, in the classroom the inspection team visited, it did not appear that the computers were used regularly.

Independent study is not available in this facility; however, students involved in credit retrieval may take books/materials back to their sleeping rooms. This opportunity is provided specifically to students who have attained senior standing. Some students take online college credit when appropriate.

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The school has a GED program and provides paid GED tutors. Eligible students may take college classes online.

Sixty-two (62) youth have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Principal Carrillo reports that Probation staff and school staff continue to have a good working relationship.

The inspection team visited a school session in progress in Unit "B." While the students were distracted initially by the inspection team's presence in the classroom, the youth were quickly redirected by the teacher and regained their focus on the lesson in which they were engaged. The inspection team observed that there were several computers in the classroom that appeared to be stored on a shelf and not used regularly by school staff or students. There were also about three students seated at a separate table in the back of the classroom who did not appear to be engaged in the lesson. The inspection team met with one of these boys outside of the classroom. The young man shared that he is 19 years old and expects to be released in a few weeks. He did not seem to have a clear sense of what would happen to him after he was released or a plan for a job search or additional vocational training. He stated that he had expressed an interest in tattoo art repeatedly but that no one had helped him explore this career option. He was polite and respectful with the inspection team.

**Recreation and Exercise:** Physical recreation is provided a minimum of two hours per day - one hour in the morning and afternoon. An afternoon recreational period is always provided on the weekends and an additional morning recreational period may also be provided on the weekends. Physical recreation includes large muscle exercises/calisthenics and ball sports.

Youth also have access to cards, games and other activities.

**Religious Program:** Protestant and Catholic services are held once weekly. Services are held Sunday and Monday, respectively. Director DeLeon noted that religious guidance is provided on request, and that volunteer local clergy are available through a local minister who is directing the program.

**Work Program:** There is a work readiness program that wards can begin while at EMJDF and continue when they are released. There is an ROP program in graphic design that is also available.

Director DeLeon and Supervisor Calabrese shared that the facility plans to explore expanding the laundry facilities in such a way that the wards in the facility will be able to do the laundry. This will provide a cost-effective means of laundering items while gaining potentially marketable experience working in a high-volume laundry facility.

**Visiting:** Visiting is difficult for many families due to the remote location of the facility and the inability for parents to access the facility using public transportation.

Principal Carrillo reported that school staff are available to meet with parents during visiting hours on the third Sunday of every month.

Phones are located on each unit. Most phone calls are collect, but staff may permit wards a "free" call home.

**Correspondence:** Postage is free. Probation staff members scan mail for contraband. Photographs are permitted if they are appropriate.

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**Access to Legal Services:** Written policies govern access to legal services. Attorneys can visit only one ward at a time due to security considerations, and may visit at reasonable hours: AM Shift – 8 AM to 11 AM & 12 PM to 2:15 PM; PM Shift - 2:25 PM to 4 PM & 5 PM to 8 PM. Wards are allowed to send and receive mail to and from attorneys, which are not censored or read by staff. Youth at intake are allowed to call their attorneys at reasonable times. Also, a youth can call his attorney while at EMJDF according to the following procedures:

- EMJDF Officers shall allow a detainee the opportunity to complete unmonitored calls at reasonable times, if they do not interfere with essential programs.
- If using County telephone, officers shall dial the number
- Limit calls to reasonable length of time
- If the County Business phone is used, record the call in the unit message log

### **Discipline**

EMJDF uses a markdown system. Room confinement is used to discipline wards that break rules, have disciplinary issues in school, or engage in fighting. Room confinement lasts 8 hours – 5 days. Wards on room confinement must stay in their rooms during free time and some programming but are still required to go to school and participate in other required activities. Youth may have a “mini-hearing” if they disagree with the basis for the room confinement. Rule violations are instances when wards may have their time in custody extended for more serious violations such as assaults or possessing contraband (including someone else’s medication).

### **Health Services: General Discussion**

Juvenile Probation contracts with California Forensic Medical Group (CFMG). There is a well-equipped clinic on site. Nurses and Nurse Practitioners are available at all times. An M.D. is available twice a week and a Physician’s Assistant (P.A.) is available every weekday. Probation contracts with Rady Children’s Hospital to provide specialty services. Minors can complain about medical care through the grievance process.

Sick call slips are collected up to four times per day.

Clinic staff reported that there are no problems with youth receiving services from their own physicians in the community. Wards are transported to appointments in the community by Probation staff or by ambulance, if appropriate.

Asthma medication is delivered immediately, if requested.

Instances of suspected malingering are first reviewed by an R.N., then a P.A., then an M.D.

Mental health services are provided by county employees. Commissioner St. Clair interviewed Dr. Sanchez, Mental Health Clinician, by phone on Dec. 17, 2009. Dr. Sanchez reported that their staff includes one psychiatric nurse, a full-time psychologist, a half-time psychologist, and two psychiatrists who share a Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday schedule.

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Mental health professionals at the facility provide a variety of services. Crisis intervention services are provided to boys at risk of suicide and of particular concern to staff. Youth on suicide watch are seen every 24 hours. Youth on the "close watch" list are seen on a weekly basis. The length of the visits vary depending on what each ward's needs.

Supervisor Calabrese shared that youth who are on suicide watch are kept in first floor rooms and receive room checks every 5 minutes for the first hour and every 15 minutes once they stabilize.

Probation officers refer wards to mental health services when necessary. Dr. Sanchez estimates that about half of the youth self-refer. Referrals are prioritized by urgency. Mental health staff also perform court ordered evaluations for medication and receive referrals from Probation for special evaluations (e.g. fire-setting, preparedness for camps).

While it is difficult to estimate the number of wards who receive mental health services, Dr. Sanchez roughly estimates that 20-30% of youth who enter the facility receive psychiatric services and 30-40% receive some type of service contact.

Dr. Sanchez reports that mental health staff have a good relationship with the Probation Department and officers. Probation officers will consult with mental health staff when appropriate and mental health staff will provide suggestions to probation staff on how to best serve youth who present with acute cases of mental health problems. The lead psychologists will provide formal training for probation staff about once a year.

The mental health staff collaborate when possible with contractors who provide programming at the facility, such as Second Chance and SAY San Diego. Opportunities to coordinate with SAY San Diego have been very limited to date, because SAY San Diego is a new contractor and they do not have offices at the facility.

Dr. Sanchez reports that confidentiality requirements limit the ability of mental health clinicians to share information with school staff; however, clinicians do participate in IEP meetings occasionally.

Special efforts to create easier transitions to services and providers in the community have been implemented since July.

Dr. Sanchez pointed to frozen staff positions as the most significant result of recent budget challenges.

### **Food Service**

The kitchen area, including walk-in refrigerator and freezer appeared very clean. There is very limited food preparation at this facility. All meals are prepared by the Sheriff's Department. Special holiday meals may be prepared in the facility. Knives and other metal cooking utensils are kept locked in the kitchen.

Wards are trained to assist in the kitchen. Meals are transported to the unit on carts that keep the food warm. Sharing is not allowed.

Meals are served in the common areas of each unit on trays. The wards are permitted to converse with other youth at their table, but youth are not permitted to talk across tables while eating. Wards are generally permitted to have 30-40 minutes for meals. Staff members are present to supervise meals while they are eating.



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Meal menus are posted. The inspection team raised concerns about whether or not wards were receiving protein from sources other than processed meats. The staff nutritionist reported during this visit that the youth receive protein from cheeses/dairy products and legumes in addition to meats. A representative from the Sheriff's Department Food Services staff reported that, beginning on December 1, 2009, wards will receive larger portions. Food services staff members determined it was necessary to begin offering larger portions after speaking with the youth. Funds have been designated for this purpose. Staff Supervisor Calabrese noted that he observed the meals appeared to be more nutritious in the past year. He noted more fresh fruit and vegetables were being served.

### **Clothing and Personal Hygiene**

The wards appeared clean and were dressed appropriately for the activities in which they were engaged and the weather/temperature. Boys wear clothing in colors that designate the unit to which they are assigned. The clothing appeared to be in good condition.

Staff members supervise youth while in the shower. The showers are individual and separated by solid walls and half doors. There have been no assaults in the shower.

### **Bedding and Linens**

There are 30 beds that may be occupied per unit. Bedding materials appeared adequate. About 80% of beds in the facility have metal frames. The remaining beds are raised concrete slabs with mattresses and blankets. Bedding is laundered once per week.

### **Transition Planning**

Supervisor Calabrese noted that many of the wards at EMJDF are waiting to go to other Probation facilities, such as JRF or Camp Barrett. Youth transitioning to these facilities will have plans in place at the new facility. Wards transitioning to other institutions, group homes, treatment programs, or community supervisor discuss their transition plan with a probation officer prior to their release from EMJDF. School staff develops transition plans for education needs.

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